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Americans:

What You Should Know

about the present crisis

in U.S.-Iranian relations

In the wake of the occupation of the United States embassy in Tehran by revolutionary Muslim students, a torrent of hysterical propaganda has been unleashed in the United States against the Iranian revolution and its leader, Imam Khomeini. Matters have gone so far that an officially patronized campaign of racist harassment and intimidation of Iranians residing in America is now under way. Individual Iranians have been assaulted, peaceful demonstrations have been disrupted, immigration laws are being enforced in a discriminatory manner, and Iranians who have been detained for alleged violations have been brutally mistreated. At the same time, the United States persists in its refusal to extradite to Iran the criminal ex-Shah. Under these critical circumstances, it is essential that American public opinion should come to realize a few essential truths concerning the situation, truths that both government and media are careful to conceal as far as possible.

What is the real cause of the current crisis?

The real cause of the current crisis is the presence of the Shah in the United States, where he enjoys the full official protection of the United States government. After ignominiously fleeing the country he had misruled for 37 years, the Shah stayed first in Egypt, and then in Morocco, the Bahamas and Mexico, becoming in each country an unwanted guest. His progress westward was in obvious preparation for entry into the United States, one of the major centers where he had deposited the usurped wealth of the Iranian people, and also the land of his masters. The United States initially assured the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran that it would not admit the Shah to its country, but it was, in fact, making secret preparations for admitting him. As early as July, Henry Precht, head of the Iran desk at the State Department, characterized the admission of the Shah to the United States as an "inevitable step" that would have to be taken sooner or later, whatever the consequences. The Shah's alleged illness was, then, merely a pretext.

After the Shah's arrival in New York, the Iranian government and its diplomatic representatives repeatedly stressed, both publicly and in private contacts, that the Shah's presence in America constituted an unacceptable insult to the Iranian people, which would inevitably produce an outburst of popular anger in Iran. The occupation of the embassy was the inevitable reaction of the Iranian people to the "inevitable step" taken by the U.S. government.

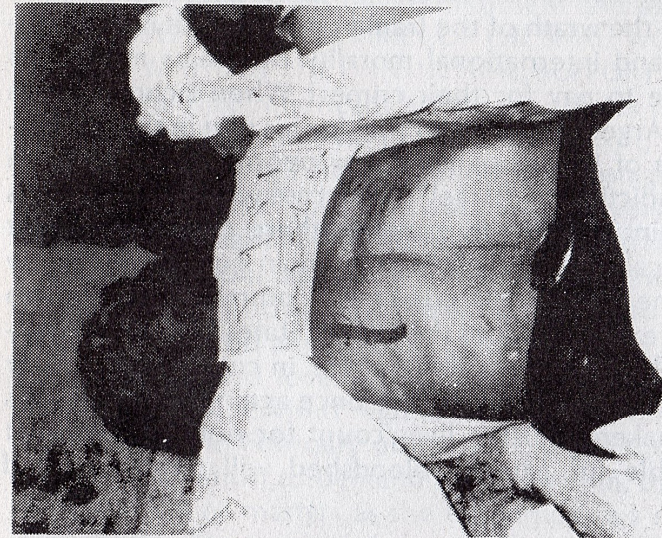
Do the Iranian government and people believe the Shah to be sick?

The question of the alleged sickness of the Shah is ultimately irrelevant, given the documented determination to admit him to the United States in any event. If the Shah is indeed sick, his sickness was at the most a pretext for his entry to the United States at that particular time, not the true reason.

Apart from this, there are grounds for believing that the Shah is not sick, or at least not so gravely as to warrant prolonged hospitalization in the United States. The United States government has not only refused Iranian doctors access to the Shah, in order to examine him for his alleged illness; it has also forbidden direct contact between them and the doctors said to be treating him. According to an unnamed (American) source at New York City Hospital, the Shah is "holding court" in his suite. Is this the behavior of a mortally ill man? Even if the Shah is seriously ill, it has become fully evident that all necessary forms of treatment are available at numerous other locations, including Mexico. The conclusion is inescapable that in this respect too, the United States government is guilty of bad faith, and has undisclosed motives of a political nature in bringing the Shah to America.

Why do the Iranian government and people insist on the extradition of the Shah?

Lied to for decades by their government and media, Americans have been accustomed to thinking of the Shah as a progressive and beneficent ruler—a little on the authoritarian side perhaps, but no more than was warranted by the traditions and social reality of his country. In fact, however, the Shah has been among the most brutal, murderous, rapacious, corrupt and treacherous rulers that even the twentieth century has seen. When Iranians compare the ruler whom they deposed at very high cost in sacrifice and martyrdom to Hitler and other Nazi leaders, this is no exaggeration. His whole reign was a series of bloodlettings and massacres. Thousands upon thousands perished during his abominable reign, either shot down en masse on the streets of Iran or obscenely tortured to death in the torture chambers of his U.S.-trained terror police, SAVAK. As if these crimes were not enough, he also systematically plundered the wealth of his impoverished people, in collaboration with his family, fellow gangsters, and their foreign patrons, headed by the United States.



More than 5 million Iranians of all ages, from all walks of life, took to the streets in a concerted effort to oust the Shah and install a form of government of their choosing. The counts of civilian casualties cited in the Western media never accurately reflected the actual records of hospitals and cemeteries. On September 8, 1978, in Tehran alone more than 4,000 persons lost their lives.

Is it just that he should escape punishment for his long list of crimes against humanity? By what right does the United States shield him from the wrath of the Iranian people? Is it not conducive to justice and international morality that mass murderers should be made to pay for their crimes? When Eichmann was abducted from Argentina to stand trial for his part in the attempted annihilation of European Jews, few people objected, even though the jurisdiction of "Israel" in the case was highly dubious from a legal point of view. By contrast, there can be no doubt about the juridical competence of the Iranian government to try the Shah for the uncounted crimes he committed on Iranian territory for 37 years. Why does the United States insist on sheltering him? Must the Iranian Muslim people, in common with their brothers around the globe, conclude once again that in the eyes of U.S. policymakers, Muslim lives count for nothing, and that those responsible for Muslim bloodshed will never be held accountable?

Why has the diplomatic status of the U.S. embassy in Tehran been violated?

It is true that the land on which an embassy stands is theoretically the sovereign territory of the government it represents. But before Americans become righteously indignant about the "violation of their territory," it should be understood very plainly that the United States, flagrantly, arrogantly, deliberately, criminally, violated the sovereignty, independence and human rights of the Iranian people for more than a quarter of a century. To protest the current occupation of the U.S. embassy in Tehran while ignoring the long and shameful record of U.S. interference in Iran is nothing but chauvinistic hypocrisy. U.S. involvement in the internal affairs of Iran began during the Second World War, but took a decisive turn when the CIA engineered a coup d'état in August 1953 against the patriotic government of Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq, thus enabling the Shah to return from the first exile into which he had been driven. There then followed a quarter-century of intense repression and exploitation under the immediate patronage and supervision of successive United States administrations. The CIA—in conjunction with Mossad, its Israeli partner in crime—built up and trained in torture techniques the notorious SAVAK, which then put to death in the most horrific fashion thousands of Iranians from all walks of life—students, workers, shopkeepers, religious leaders, peasants, intellectuals. At the

same time, the Shah brought the Iranian economy to the brink of ruin for the sake of his own enrichment and that of his foreign masters. NONE OF THE CRIMES OF THE SHAH WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE UNFLINCHING SUPPORT OF THE U.S.

If some fifty Americans are now hostages in Tehran, under conditions that involve no physical discomfort, let it be remembered that the entire Iranian nation was hostage to the ruthless tyranny of the Shah for many decades, and very few in America ever gave a thought to their condition, let alone raised their voices in protest. If public opinion is aroused in the United States by the detention of fifty hostages at the embassy, stop to think how much more aroused and angered must be the Iranian people who saw their relatives and loved ones slaughtered for years by a U.S.-installed and supervised regime. As Imam Khomeini said on his return to Iran in February of this year, when the Iranian people arose in revolution to demand their freedom, they were given a cemetery full of martyrs as the contemptuous response of U.S. imperialism. Throughout the year of revolution (January 1978-February 1979), Carter was always ready to extend his support and approbation to the Shah. Perhaps most notorious was his telegram of encouragement to the Shah on the eve of the great massacre of September 8, 1978, when more than 4000 people perished in Tehran alone. The timing cannot have been coincidental, and is indeed prima facie evidence for Carter's collusion in the Shah's massacres. The American people should feel grateful to the Iranian people for the restraint they are displaying in not demanding the extradition of Carter in addition to that of the Shah.

Concerning the embassy in particular, the following should be noted. Throughout the years of the Shah's reign, the U.S. embassy was the real center of power in the country; it was a center not primarily of diplomatic representation but of gross intervention and domination. It is significant that at least two U.S. ambassadors in Iran had well-known CIA backgrounds, Richard Helms and William Sullivan; and even after the revolution, the U.S. government wished to send to Iran as ambassador another figure with CIA experience, Cutler. The U.S. embassy has been regarded in Iran not so much as the site of legitimate diplomatic representation as the headquarters of a foreign occupying power, and it is remarkable that the revolutionary anger of the Iranian people was not directed earlier against this center of intervention and intrigue which masqueraded as an embassy.



Is it not within the power of the American people to demand the extradition of the Shah to stand trial and also, once and for all, an end to U.S. approbation of foreign criminals? As the many crowded cemeteries attest, much of the Iranian population lost loved ones who chose death at the hands of the U.S.-trained soldiers in order to free their countrymen from the grip of the Shah and the CIA. Is it just for the Shah to have no sentence but a kind of long, continuous pleasure-cruise, financed by the millions he stole from the nation he was supposed to serve?

Is it not true that the occupation of the U.S. embassy is a demagogic ploy of Imam Khomeini calculated to distract attention from domestic problems and bolster his sagging popularity among the Iranian people?

It is in the interest of the American people that they not be duped by the slick and deceptive propaganda of the media and various so-called experts, but come to a realistic assessment of the situation. The occupation of the U.S. embassy in Tehran was a spontaneous move by a group of Muslim students which immediately drew the unanimous support of all classes of the Iranian nation. Its ultimate cause was the bitter anger that the Iranian

people feel toward the United States for the reasons outlined above, and its immediate cause was the latest insult to the people that the Shah's admission to America constituted. Americans would be deceiving themselves if they attributed it to any internal political development in Iran. Imam Khomeini is the beloved leader of the Iranian people, not their dictator; he articulated their desires, aspirations and demands. No one should underestimate the depth of either Iranian devotion to Imam Khomeini or Iranian anger at the treacherous and criminal behavior of the United States government.

Does not Imam Khomeini's approval of the embassy seizure show him to be irrational?

It is true that Imam Khomeini is a very exceptional figure, quite different from the ordinary run of politicians with whom the United States government is accustomed to dealing. This is the reason for much of the frustration U.S. policymakers are now experiencing; they cannot comprehend the pure and exalted nature of his leadership. Imam Khomeini is the most rational of men, gifted with a clear and incisive vision of what he wishes to achieve on behalf of his nation and Islam, and dedicated, in utterly consistent and self-sacrificing fashion, to accomplishing it.

How should the crisis be resolved?

The crisis can be resolved only by sending the Shah to Iran to stand trial and face punishment for his numerous crimes against the Iranian people. Further, the wealth that he plundered from the Iranian people should be restored to them. America should also cease to shelter other criminals of the ex-Shah's regime, such as the butchers, Oveysi and Azhari. The United States must also foreswear all further interference in the affairs of Iran, in full awareness of the fact that the Iran of 1979 is not the Iran of 1953, and that any attempt by U.S. imperialism to repeat in Iran the crimes it committed in Chile, the Dominican Republic and elsewhere is doomed to failure. Such a course of action will be to the benefit of the American people themselves, who have no stake in the criminal adventures planned by the bandits and supercapitalists like Rockefeller, Kissinger and Nixon who are among the Shah's closest friends in the U.S.

Is it realistic to expect the U.S. to extradite the Shah?

When the Iranian people embarked on their revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Shah, many foreign observers regarded their endeavor as "unrealistic." The Shah was equipped with a huge apparatus of repression and enjoyed the patronage of the U.S. and other superpowers, while the Iranian people stood alone and empty-handed against him. Yet the "realistic" predictions proved wrong and the Iranian people triumphed. Americans should know that what is unrealistic is to expect the Iranian people to abandon their just demand for the extradition of the Shah, and that Iranians will not be intimidated by threats either of force or of economic boycott. They have already suffered heroically for the sake of their freedom, independence and dignity, and will not hesitate to make further sacrifices if U.S. imperialism persists in its hostile course and dares to commit new crimes against the Iranian people. It is the historic moral responsibility of the American people to rise up in protest against their country's becoming a haven for murderers and bandits, to demand that the Shah be extradited to Iran, and thereby to begin making expiation for the offenses the United States has committed against Iran.

Return the Shah to Iran to stand trial for his crimes!
Restore the usurped wealth of the Iranian people!
Cease the racist harassment of Iranians in the U.S.!
Liberate U.S. foreign policy from monopoly capitalists!
Long live the Islamic revolution of Iran under the leadership of Imam Khomeini!

A Message to the American People from Abulhasan Bani-Sadr, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Americans! Ever since the entry of the students into the U.S. embassy—or what should be called, more exactly, an important center for conducting espionage in our part of the world—the propaganda machine of imperialism has been working day and night in order to deceive you, Americans, and the rest of the world, that under the Islamic regime, no law or convention is respected; that traditions, revered by humanity for centuries, are being undermined; that your embassy, which is regarded as part of your country's territory, has been stormed; and that persons deserving diplomatic immunity have been taken hostage.

But you Americans are never told that your so-called embassy in Tehran in no way resembles a true embassy. Most documents were removed from the embassy shortly before and immediately after the overthrow of the last U.S. puppet, the deposed Shah. Furthermore, the remaining documents and papers were burnt in three hours and the memories of the computers in the embassy were destroyed when the students began entering the embassy. Nonetheless, the documents and papers that have been seized leave no doubt that the embassy was the actual center of rule in the time of the deposed Shah. The embassy of your government was in fact the real court in Tehran. Now ask your government how long it would tolerate other countries' turning their embassies in Washington into centers of dominance and interference in all affairs, major and minor, and bases for espionage in your country and the hemisphere in general.

Americans! It would be in your best interest to rid yourselves of the influences of the false propaganda conducted by monopoly capitalism and its agents who rule over you. Ask your government why, contrary to its pretences, it has itself trampled time-honored tradition by transforming its embassy into a center for dominance and espionage in our country and the surrounding region. If you had staged a successful revolution, would you have regarded as bona fide diplomats the staff of a foreign embassy that had interfered in your internal affairs for thirty-five years? Would you have

acquiesced if the same embassy had stayed on and continued its policy and methods just as if nothing had happened? This is the truth that they hide from you.

You fought against Hitler's Germany, and tried Nazi leaders at Nuremburg under the pretext of establishing a worthy precedent in the world. Many of those leaders were sentenced and put to death. You did not neglect to try Rudolf Hess, even though he had sought asylum in England, and you have still not released him from prison after the many years he has spent there, despite his advanced age. What, then, has caused your government to violate the very tradition that it established in concert with the European countries? Why should it receive, shelter and protect, at all costs, the deposed Shah, who is a most brutal criminal? Ever since his departure from Iran, the ex-Shah has been trying to come to America, and your embassy in Tehran has been making preparations for his arrival there; does this not reveal that he has been an American puppet throughout? Is it right and proper for your government to impose someone on a country, give him free rein to commit all sorts of crimes, treachery, robbery and corruption, and then receive him in your country and provide him protection there?

Is it really expecting too much if our people urge your government, in deference to the tradition established by the trials of the Nazi leaders, to extradite to Iran one of the most notorious criminals of the century in order for him to be tried publicly and fairly?

When they tell you that the extradition of the deposed Shah would discredit the American people, they are lying to you. On the contrary, it would be a great victory for you Americans and a step forward in promoting precedents that foster freedom and the spirit of justice.

You are entitled to ask why the Iranian nation insists on the trial of an apparently wretched and sick man. Here is the answer:

(1) Would it not be a great injustice to all humanity if the same sick man were to remain until his death in the hands of CIA agents, taking with him to the grave the records of the treachery, crime and corruption he committed in his 37 years of rule, as well as that committed by his father before him? In a country such as yours where the president had to resign following the Watergate scandal because of the bugging of the Democratic Party headquarters, how could it be correct and justifiable that the ex-Shah should remain untried after all the treachery and crime he has committed, and that the conscience of humanity should remain

uninformed of all that made him into a living symbol of criminality?

You are well aware that the trial of a criminal is not intended for punishment alone; punishment is not a goal in itself. Trials seek to promote the conscience of men and to reveal the causes and factors which lead to crimes; by promoting the conscience of humanity, they are designed to put an end to those causes and factors.

(2) This person, together with his family, relatives and aides, plundered the wealth of a poor nation. Do you in America have any doubt that the ex-Shah could never have amassed such a great fortune if he had been a mere businessman, manufacturer or merchant? Now ask your government, as well as the other governments concerned, why they refuse to restore to the Iranian government this huge fortune which rightfully belongs to our impoverished nation! Is it not the right of our people to recover its plundered property? Is it in conformity with the norms of progressive humanity that Western states should refuse to return this plundered wealth to the people of Iran? Is it right for the government of the United States so openly to support the worst financial banditry and corruption of the present century, or maybe of all human history? Does not this discredit you as a nation?

(3) Neither has the ex-Shah himself nor have his aides ceased to conspire and incite against the Islamic Republic. Your government has still not abandoned the idea of ruling Iran, and is still involved in creating bloody incidents within the boundaries of Iran. Is it right for the American government to turn your country into a base for conspiracy and instigation and to leave professional plunderers free to commit all sorts of crime against the people of Iran?

Americans! An American lost his life in Iran in defense of the Constitutional Revolution and we always cherish his memory. Until the American government began to interfere in our internal affairs, the Iranian people regarded the U.S. with great friendship. On several occasions your government acted to prevent the excesses in Iran of Russia and England, the two aggressive states of the time. But then your government began itself to interfere in the internal affairs of Iran. In 1953, the CIA planned and executed a coup d'etat against the patriotic government of Dr. Musaddeq, and from then on, the U.S. embassy in Iran became a center of rule and dominance.

We have a legitimate demand to make of you. In accordance with our human rights, we demand that the perpetrator of 37 years of treachery, crime and corruption be handed over to us so that his trial may serve to make men aware of the factors involved in the subjugation of a nation to a foreign power and exposure to annihilation at its hands. The trial of the ex-Shah might serve as the beginning of new development in human history, the leading to the independence and liberty of all nations.

Americans! Using a handful of traitors, your government brought our economy to the brink of ruin. As if that were not enough, it now threatens us with an economic boycott and a refusal to sell goods to us. But you must know that the survival of the Iranian nation is of benefit to the whole of humanity, and that its ruin would be a great loss to the whole of humanity. The economic threat now made against us is itself an indication of how your government already went a long way toward destroying our economy in the time of the ex-Shah. In order to survive, the only path open to Iran is to persist determinedly in its Islamic Revolution. Know, too, that the threat of an economic boycott does not scare us, for self-reliance is in fact our only path to salvation.

Americans! History has confronted both our nations with a great test. We ask that you carefully examine the contents of this message. If you conclude that the Iranian people are in the right, ask your government to act in true conformity with human rights by surrendering to our nation the ex-Shah and his properties, together with those of his relatives and the high-ranking officials of the former regime now living in the United States. This would be a great triumph for true human civilization. If this takes place, will anyone dare to betray his people any more? Will anyone be prepared any longer to base his rule on torture, massacre and corruption? Rest assured that your compatriots are being treated humanely, and have no anxiety about their comfort. In this connection, everything has been done to remove any cause for anxiety.

Abulhasan Bani-Sadr
Acting Foreign Minister
Islamic Republic of Iran



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